

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ACDA-05 IO-10 SAM-01 SR-02 ORM-01

DPW-01 AID-05 OMB-01 SCS-03 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07

L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /095 W

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R 021210Z FEB 75

FM AMCONSUL TABRIZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 106

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMCONSUL ADANA

AMCONSUL KHORRAMSHAHR

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TABRIZ 0008

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, MOPS, IR, IZ

SUBJ: IRAQI KURDISH WAR: TEMPORARILY QUIET

REF: (A) TABRIZ 32 OF 1974; (B) TEHRAN 344

SUMMARY: RECENT TRIPS TO THE BORDER AREAS OF IRAN FOUND THE WAR QUIETLY SETTLING INTO WINTER INACTIVITY WITH BOTH SIDES LARGELY CONTENT TO HOLD THEIR POSITIONS FOR THE TIME BEING. THE ANTICIPATED KURDISH WINTER COUNTER-OFFENSIVE HAS NOT MATERIALIZED AND IT APPEARS LESS AND LESS LIKELY TO OCCUR. KURDISH MORALE IS SAID TO REMAIN HIGH AND, DESPITE THE REVERSES OF LAST SUMMER'S IRAQI OFFENSIVE, THE KURDS APPEAR TO BELIEVE THAT THEY CAN HOLD MOST OF THEIR REMAINING TERRITORY. THE FLOW OF REFUGEES HAS SUBSIDED BUT IRANIAN BORDER

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RITORY. THE FLOW OF REFUGEES HAS SUBSIDED BUT IRANIAN BORDER

AREA OFFICIALS ARE PREDICTING THAT IT WILL RRSUME IN THE SPRING.
MOST REFUGEES ARE REASONABLY WELL HOUSED FOR THE WINTER.
SOME FOREIGN REFUGEE ASSISTANCE HAS BEEN SENT ACROSS THE BORDER
BUT THE AMOUNTS ARE LIMITED. END SUMMARY.

1. THIS IS A COMBINED REPORT ON TWO RECENT TRIPS INTO THE
BORDER AREAS OF NORTH-WESTERN IRAN: JANUARY 8 TO 11 WAS
SPENT IN KERMANSHAHAN AND KURDISTAN PROVINCES AND JANUARY
26 TO 29 WAS SPENT IN THE BORDER AREA OF WEST AZERBAIJAN.

2. STATE OF THE WAR: THE KURDISH COUNTER-OFFENSIVE
EARLIER EXPECTED HAS NOT MATERIALIZED. PARTIALLY THIS IS
ACCOUNTED FOR BY THE CONTINUED KURDISH LACK OF HEAVY ARMS
AND PERHAPS ALSO BY AN UNUSUALLY MILD WINTER THAT HAS
ALLOWED RELATIVELY HEAVY IRAQI AIR ACTIVITY. AT LEAST, THESE
ARE THE PRIMARY REASONS CITED BY SAVAK (IRANIAN INTEL-
LIGENCE) CHIEFS IN KURDISTAN AND WEST AZERBAIJAN AND BY THE
UNUALLY RELIABLE GOVERNOR OF SARDASHT. THESE AND OTHER SOURCES
CONTINUE TO INSIST THAT KURDISH MORALE REMAINS GOOD AND
THAT THE KURDS CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT WITH THE ARMS
PRESENTLY AVAILABLE TO THEM THEY CAN HOLD THEIR REMAINING
STRIP OF TERRITORY ALONG THE IRANIAN BORDER AND NORTHERN
KRUDISTAN. THIS, THEY HOPE, WILL FORCE THE IRAQI ARMY TO
CONTINUE TAKING HEAVY LOSSES IN ATTACKS ON KURDISH MOUNTAIN
POSITIONS.

3. LEAD ELEMENTS OF THE IRAQI ARMY, ACCORDING TO THE GOVERNORS
OF SARDASHT AND PIRANSHAHR, ARE COMPOSED OF SOME 5,000
KURDS FIGHTING FOR THE IRAQIS. THESE ARE SAID TO COME MOSTLY
FROM THE HARKI, SURCHI, AND ZEBARI TRIBES. THEIR NUMBERS
APPEAR TO HAVE REMAINED FAIRLY CONSTANT AND THERE IS NO
REPORT OF ANY LESSENING OF GENERAL KURDISH UNITY BEHIND BARZANI.
IRAQI AIRPLANES HAVE CONTINUED TO FUNCTION WITH FAIR REGULARITY
AND BOTH THE RED LION AND SUN (IRANIAN RED CROSS) DIRECTOR
AND THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR IN REZAIYEH AND THE HOSPITAL IN
PIRANSHAHR REPORT A STEADY TRICKLE OF BOMB CASUALTIES.
GENERALLY, CASUALTIES HAVE BEEN LIGHT AND THE DIRECTOR OF THE
PIRANSHAHR HOSPITAL, THE FIRST STOP FOR THOSE EVACUATED TO
IRAN, STATED THAT MOST WOUNDS ARE FROM BOMBS AND ARTILLERY
SHEELS WITH SOME FROM WHITE PHOSPHORUS AND NONE RECENTLY FROM
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4. IRANIAN PARTICIPATION: IRANIAN INPUTS APPEAR TO HAVE
REMAINED FAIRLY CONSTANT OVER THE LAST SEVERAL MONTHS. WHILE
THE KURDS DO NOT SEEM TO BE RECEIVING THE LEVEL OF ARMS
NECESSARY FOR AN OFFENSIVE THEY ARE RECEIVING ADEQUATE
SUPPORT TO MAINTAIN THEIR PRESENT POSITIONS FOR THE TIME BEING.
THE ROAD FROM PIRANSHAHR INTO THE CHOMAN AREA IS BEING KEPT

OPEN BY SEVERAL SNOW PLOWS AND BULLDOZERS. THE NEW ROAD DESCRIBED REFTTEL A (PARAGRAPH ONE) GOES ONLY TO, BUT NOT BEYOND, THE BORDER ACCORDING TO THE GOVERNOR OF SARDASHT AND IS STRICTLY A SECONDARY ROUTE FOR SUPPLIES DURING THE WINTER. BARZANI KURDS CONTINUE TO CIRCULATE FREELY IN MUCH OF WEST AZERBAIJAN AND KURDISTAN. THE INCREASED NUMBER OF MILITARY AGE MALES SEEN ON THIS TRIP ALSO SUPPORT THE REPORTS OF THE LOW LEVEL OF FIGHTING.

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5. REFUGEE SITUATION: THE FLOW OF REFUGEES HAS VIRTUALLY STOPPED BUT MOST OFFICIALS CONTACTED EXPECTED THAT IF THE WAR CONTINUES IT WILL BE RESUMED NEXT YEAR WITH REFUGEES FROM NORTH-WESTERN KURDISTAN WHO COULD NOT REACH IRAN BEFORE THIS WINTER. PRESENT REFUGEE TOTALS, AS GIVEN BY VARIOUS GOVERNORS GENERAL, SAVAK CHIEFS, AND THE RED LION AND SUN DIRECTOR IN REZAIYEH ARE: WEST AZERBAIJAN; 40,000; KURDISTAN; 7,000; KERMANSHAHAN; 50,000; KHUZISTAN; 40,000 (LATTER FIGURE

PROVIDED REZAIYEH) FOR A TOTAL OF 137,000. THE FIGURES ARE NOT EXACT BECAUSE, WHILE MOST OF THE REFUGEES ARE IN CAMPS, WEST AZERBAIJAN HAS FROM 3,000 TO 10,000 LOCATED IN VILLAGES WITH RELATIONS AND IN LOCAL COOPERATIVES WHICH ARE PLAYING HOST TO SEVERAL THOUSAND SHEEP, CATTLE AND GOATS BROUGHT BY REFUGEES. TWO BARACKS LIKE CAMPS IN WEST AZERBAIJAN WITH A TOTAL OF 30,000 PEOPLE ARE COMPLETE AND FUNCTIONING WELL. A SIMILAR CAMP IN KURDISTAN IS BEHIND SCHEDULE AND SEVERAL HUNDRED REFUGEES
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ARE IN AND AROUND SANANDAJ WHILE ANOTHER THOUSAND ARE STILL IN TENTS IN A MUDDY GULLY NEAR THE BORDER TOWN OF MARIVAN. IN KERMANSHAHAN SOME 6,000 ARE LOCATED IN SMALL CITIES OF TWO-BEDROOM ROW HOUSES (250 HOUSES TO EACH OF SIX AREAS) WHICH THE GOVERNOR GENERAL HOPES CAN SOMEDAY BE TURNED OVER TO IRANIAN VILLAGERS. WHILE THIS EXPENSIVE EFFORT IS MOVING RATHER SLOWLY SOME 44,000 REFUGEES ARE STILL IN TENTS IN THE FAIRLY WARM QASR-E SHIRIN REGION. REFUGEES ARE GENERALLY WELL CARED FOR, FEW ARE COLD AND NONE ARE HUNGRY. A WIDE VARIETY OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS IS STARTING TO COMPLAIN THAT THE REFUGEES ARE TOO DEMANDING, WANT EVERYTHING DONE FOR THEM AND DEMAND PAY WHEN ASKED TO WORK FOR THEMSELVES. THERE ARE SOME INDICATIONS THAT ON A BROAD, BUT LOW, LEVEL THESE FEELINGS ARE SHARED BY IRANIAN KURDS OF KURDISTAN BUT NOT WEST AZERBAIJAN WHERE LOCAL KURDS ARE OFTEN RELATED TO IRAQI KURDS.

6 INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE: A JOINT DANISH, FINNISH, SWEDISH, AND NORWEGIAN PROJECT OF AID TO THE HOMELESS STILL IN IRAQ SEEMS TO HAVE TERMINATED FOR THE TIME BEING. ACCORDING TO RED LION AND SUN OFFICIALS IN REZAIYEH THIS PROJECT SHIPPED ABOUT DOLS150,000 WORTH OF CLOTHES, BLANKETS AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES INTO IRAQ AND APPARENTLY FELT THAT THIS WAS SUFFICIENT FOR THE AREA IT COULD REACH. THESE OFFICIALS ALSO STATED THAT ONE BRITISH DOCTOR AND ONE NURSE WERE CONTINUING TO WORK IN IRAQ BUT THEY DID NOT KNOW WHAT ORGANIZATION THEY REPRESENTED. AN INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS REPRESENTATIVE WAS SAID TO HAVE VISITED WEST AZERBAIJAN IN EARLY JANUARY AND TO HAVE PROMISED TO RETURN WITH SOME ASSISTANCE IN MID FEBRUARY. THIS PROMISE CAN NOT BE CONFIRMED FROM HERE.

7. COMMENT: THERE ARE NO SIGNS OF A KURDISH OFFENSIVE BUILDING UP AND ALL THOUGHTS OF RETAKING AND HOLDING AREAS LOST TO THE IRAQI SUMMER OFFENSIVE APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN DROPPED. AS FAR AS I CAN DETERMINE THE KURDS STILL HOPE THAT BY HOLDING ON TO STRIP ALONG THE IRANIAN BORDER AND MUCH OF NORTHERN KURDISTAN AND BY CNSTANT RAIDING IN IRAQI HELD AREAS OF DURDISTAN THEY CAN BLEED THE IRAQI ARMY AT A RATE WHICH WILL PROVE UNACCEPTABLE IN THE LONG RUN AND EVENTUALLY FORCE A CHANGE OF POLICY. IN VIEW OF IRAQI SUCCESSES IN LAST SUMMER'S OFFENSIVE, THE KURDS' ABILITY TO MAKE THIS STRATEGY WORK IS LIKELY TO

DEPEND INCREASINGLY ON IRANIAN ASSISTANCE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: KURDS, WAR, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975TABRIZ00008
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750038-0335
From: TABRIZ
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750279/aaaactpr.tel
Line Count: 231
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 TABRIZ 32, 75 OF 1974, 75 TEHRAN 344
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 AUG 2003 by KelleyW0>; APPROVED <26 NOV 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: IRAQI KURDISH WAR: TEMPORARILY QUIET
TAGS: PINS, MOPS, IR, IZ
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006